



Can We Feed the World?: The Future of Food

Scientific American Editors

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Can We Feed the World?: The Future of Food by the Editors of Scientific American

With global population numbers projected to increase by 2 billion by 2050, a veritable food crisis is on the horizon. In this eBook, *Can We Feed the World? The Future of Food*, we examine some of the complex causative factors involved in the coming "food crisis" and the innovative ideas and technologies designed to increase food production sustainably. We also examine current industry methods to increase production and the controversies surrounding them, including not only hot-button issues like genetically modified (or GM) and processed foods, but also food safety and the physical effects of the modern diet. To start the discussion, Jonathan Foley throws down the gauntlet with the first article, "The Grand Challenge: Can We Feed the World and Sustain the Planet?" In it he takes a macroscopic look at the coming crisis and presents five solutions that could both double the world's food production by mid-century as well as decrease greenhouse gas emissions and curb environmental damage. Other articles discuss technologies ranging from more sustainable offshore fish farming to "vertical farms," and an entire section tackles GM crops. Hugely controversial, GM crops are either the magic bullet that will save millions from starvation or Frankenstein's monster. To that end, don't miss Sasha Nemecek's "The Pros and Cons of GM Foods," in which she interviews experts on both sides of this issue, as well as "Three Myths about Genetically Modified Crops," by Natasha Gilbert. Later, we delve into the processed food industry, taking a magnifying glass to fast food and high fructose corn syrup, as well as food safety issues, including monitoring sources of contamination as well as preventing food poisoning. With all the possibilities on the horizon—from GM crops to new technologies in farming and fishing—world hunger does not have to be inevitable, but we'll need to be resourceful in managing the food supply so that we can preserve the planet and ourselves.

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